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Vol. 3  
30dphh  
October 1999



# DPHHS NEWS



October 1999

## Governor Appoints Tobacco Council

Gov. Marc Racicot has appointed a 23-member citizen council to provide the public with a voice in helping the state Public Health and Human Services Department develop a comprehensive, statewide tobacco prevention program.

Council members represent a variety of organizations, agencies and communities that are working to prevent tobacco use in Montana. Specifically, the council will assist DPHHS in:

- Developing a long-term comprehensive, statewide tobacco use prevention plan.
- Providing advice on tobacco use prevention spending.
- Coordinating prevention program activities with other health-related prevention activities.
- Reviewing program progress.

The council held its first meeting on Oct. 13 in Helena. For information about the state's prevention program or advisory council, contact Jane Smilie at 444-9020.

"Our data show that tobacco use is the single most preventable cause of death and disease in Montana," DPHHS Director Laurie Ekanger said. "We are grateful to these organizations and individuals for their willingness to help us address this serious problem."

The 1998 national settlement between state attorneys general and the tobacco industry was intended to reimburse states for tobacco-related health care costs. Montana will receive \$922 million from the settlement over a 25-year period. The 1999 Montana Legislature has appropriated \$7 million in settlement funds to DPHHS to develop a comprehensive tobacco use prevention program by 2001. The program will complement ongoing tobacco use prevention activities started through grant funds from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Major program components are:

- Community-based programs.
- School-based programs.
- Public education and awareness strategies.
- Programs to help tobacco users quit.
- Programs to address tobacco use among targeted populations, such as American Indians and smokeless tobacco users.
- An evaluation system to monitor the program's progress and ensure its effectiveness.
- Technical assistance and training for schools and communities, and coordination with other health-related prevention programs.



### CALENDAR OF EVENTS

#### OCTOBER

*National Disability Employment  
Awareness Month  
Domestic Violence Awareness Month*

##### October 19-21

Governor's Conference on Aging  
Kalispell  
Contact: Brian LaMoure (800) 332-2272 or  
444-7782

##### October 20

Educational Brown Bag Lunch  
Noon-1 p.m., Cogswell Room C209B  
Topic: TBA

##### October 26-28

Eligibility Workers Association Conference  
Whitefish  
Contact: Patty Guiberson (406) 563-3448

##### October 28-30

Early Childhood Conference  
Bozeman  
Contact: 587-7786

##### November 3

Educational Brown Bag Lunch  
Noon-1 p.m., Cogswell Room C209B  
Topic: TBA

##### November 3

MT Public Health Improvement Task Force  
Billings Holiday Inn Grand  
Contact: Melanie Reynolds, 444-4474

##### November 10

State Advisory Council on  
Food and Nutrition  
DPHHS Building Room 301  
Contact: Crystelle Fogle 444-2762

##### November 11

Holiday: Veterans Day

##### November 17

Educational Brown Bag Lunch  
Noon-1 p.m., Cogswell Room C209B  
Topic: TBA

## A Message From the Director: *MTPRRIME/SABHRS*



Laurie Ekanger  
DPHHS Director

I want to sincerely thank all of you for your hard work and patience as we struggle with implementing the State's new accounting and payroll system, which has been renamed the Statewide Accounting, Budgeting and Human Resources System (SABHRS). One of my goals for my term as your director was to simplify and streamline systems in order

to make your jobs easier. Experiencing this current staggering conversion work effort is so disheartening. This is not going the right direction toward simplification!!! I want you to know that we are working very closely with the Department of Administration to articulate our needs and problems. DOA has a very detailed and specific work plan to address the most significant issues first, such as payroll, payroll expenditure information and access to the accounting information needed for federal reports. As we work our way into this new system, I intend to continue to advocate for simplicity. Please share any suggestions you have. And hang in there. It WILL get better.

### Budget Planning

On October 4 we kicked off our Department FY2002/03 budget planning process for the next

Legislative session. We held a METNET video session with about 100 people attending from around the state. Dave Lewis, Governor Racicot's budget director, offered his perspective on state revenue. While Dave anticipates a significant budget surplus at the end of this biennium, he believes that this surplus is a result primarily of income tax increases due to capital gains, for example stock market performance. Dave cautioned that this is not a predictable, stable source of revenue for Montana, and he outlined a number of economic concerns, such as the depressed agriculture economy. We kid Dave that his job is to dampen spending expectations, and he made a pretty good case. Thank you to our DPHHS METNET site facilitators! Each Division will work now to develop proposals to submit to me in March 2000.

### Thank You, and Thank You Again

Thank you for sharing your ideas, suggestions and perceptions about our Department by completing the *Employee Survey*. As I told you in the survey cover letter, this really is a key tool in trying to have the best possible work place.

And thank you for your incredible generosity. Just two weeks into the *State Employee Combined Charitable Giving Campaign*, 260 DPHHS employees have contributed \$26,417.24!

*(Advisory Council . . . continued from Page 1)*

## List of Tobacco Council Memebers

Representative Loren Soft, Billings  
Senator Dale Berry, Hamilton  
Representative Trudi Schmidt, Great Falls  
Dr. Robert M. Shepard, Helena, American Lung Assoc.  
Jeri Domme, Helena, American Heart Assoc.  
Gail Michelotti, Great Falls, American Cancer Society  
Dr. J. Bruce Robertson, Bozeman, MT Medical Assoc.  
David Hemion, Helena, MT Dental Assoc.  
Joan Miles, Helena, County Health Officers  
Connie Olson, Glendive, Community Tobacco Programs  
Linda Lee, Missoula, MT Tobacco Free Kids  
Kristianne Wilson, Billings, Health Care Providers  
Dana Donovan, Larshan, Montana's youth  
Laura Gebhart, Kalispell, Montana Public Health Assoc.  
Todd Thun, Deer Lodge, Montana Nurses Assoc.  
Nancy Davis Walker, Great Falls, Tobacco Free MT  
Tim Solomon, Havre, Montana Law Enforcement  
Russell Hill, Helena, New West Health Plan  
Verner Bertelsen, Helena, Montana's senior citizens  
Gordon Belcourt, Billings, Montana's American Indians  
Dr. Jon Hauxwell, Billings, Indian Health Service  
Dale Sheldon, Conrad, MT Assoc. of County Officials  
Nancy Ellery, Helena, DPHHS

## *Excellent!*



*Congratulations to the 1999 DPHHS Employee Excellence Award winners, from left, Karlene Grossberg (HCSD), Joyce Burgett (HPSD), Mike Perkio (CSED) and Katherine Buckley-Patton (HCSD-Dillon). All are shown here during the September award ceremony with Gov. Marc Racicot.*

## A Word From The Doctor: *Influenza Season*



By Michael R. Spence, MD,  
MPH Medical Officer

Dear fellow state employees:

Well fall has finally arrived and we can enjoy the cooler temperatures, the changing of the colors of the trees and the kids being back in school. One thing that fall brings that is not enjoyable is flu season. Every year we have our share of persons sick with the flu and unfortunately some of them will die. Last year, for example, we lost almost 250 Montanans to the flu and pneumonia. This is a terrible tragedy because these diseases are, in many cases, preventable.

Flu shots are starting to become available at doctors' offices and health department clinics. Pneumonia shots are available all year. It takes about three weeks from the time you get the shot for your body to react and protect you. Once you get the flu shot the protection lasts about five or six months before it starts decreasing. Since most of the flu cases usually start occurring around Thanksgiving and continue into February or March, we **recommend that people start getting their shots around mid to late October**. However, even if you miss those dates, it is never too late in a flu season to get the shots.

Everyone should get the flu shots. People who should get both the flu shot and the pneumonia shot are: individuals 65 and older; those with diabetes, heart disease, emphysema, asthma and other lung diseases; those with illnesses that affect their immune systems; and smokers.

I think we have all heard someone say, "I got the flu shot and I still got the flu," or "it gave me the flu." Scientifically, the last statement isn't true. The flu shot does not contain a live virus, so it cannot infect you. There are two main reasons why people get the flu after getting the shot. First a person may have already been infected and the shot did not have enough time to make the body build up protection before they got sick. The other reason is that, although the shot is very good, it is not always 100 percent protective. It can decrease the intensity of — but not always prevent — the flu in some people. However, you can be sure that these individuals would have been a lot sicker if they had not received the flu shot.

I plan to get my shot very soon. I hope I can count on you doing the same thing.

## Damrow Recognized as UM Distinguished Alumni

Todd Damrow, supervisor in the DPHHS epidemiology section and a leading authority on such topics as bioterrorism and Hantavirus, was honored Oct. 8 as a Distinguished Alumni of the University of Montana.

The award was presented as part of UM's homecoming festivities.

Damrow, who has worked at DPHHS since February 1991, received his master's degree in microbiology from UM in 1979 and his doctorate in 1983. He was nominated for the award by one of his former instructors at UM.

## Open House



The new DPHHS Public Assistance office in Park County celebrated its open house in September. Dozens of guests attended the event, which was coordinated by the Livingston Chamber of Commerce. The office also houses Job Service, Adult and Child Protective Services, Quality Assurance and MSU Extension Service employees.

# Super Sports Performance

Active Montanans need the right fuel for peak performances. Getting the right food and fluids is important whether you are a high school sports star, a soccer mom or a weekend hunter.

"Fueling your body is one of the best ways to improve physical performance," says Patti Steinmuller, MS, RD (Registered Dietitian), sports nutritionist and instructor at Montana State University in Bozeman. "Even if you are not a competitive athlete, eating well is the tastiest way to energize your day. The problem is that many people pay more attention to the fuel in their car than the fuel in their body."

When it comes to sports, good nutrition is as important as training, motivation, talent, or the proper equipment. A balance of nutrients is essential for success. Active people need plenty of fluids to prevent overheating and to remove waste products from muscles. They need carbohydrates and fat for physical and mental energy, and protein for muscle maintenance and rebuilding. Vitamins, minerals and other nutrients are needed to build strong bodies, prevent injuries and maintain good health.

According to Steinmuller, even busy families can get the nutrients they need for competitive and recreational activities. "The key is to plan ahead. Make sure that your fridge, cupboards, car coolers, school lockers, and gym bags are stocked with plenty of fluids, high-octane carbs, and low-fat proteins."

Eat Right Montana, a statewide network of health and nutrition professionals, urges active Montanans to make energy and fluid needs a top priority. To maximize performance and recover quickly after workouts, athletes of all ages need power foods and refreshing fluids throughout the day.

For updated sports nutrition information, contact a local dietitian, hospital, or MSU Extension office. Or check a library, bookstore or web site for one of these resources: **Nancy Clark's Sports Nutrition Guidebook: Eating to Fuel Your Active Lifestyle** (by Nancy Clark, MS, RD); **Play Hard, Eat Right: A Parent's Guide to Sports Nutrition for Children** (by Debbi Jennings, MS, RD and Suzanne Steen, DSc, RD); or **ADA's Complete Food and Nutrition Guide** (by Roberta Duyff, MS, RD).



## Nutrition Tips:

*Getting the right fuel when you have:  
1 hour or less between strenuous activity*

- Drink water.
- Fuel with carbohydrate in liquid form – sports drinks or fruit juices.
- Try fruits like oranges, bananas, grapes, peaches, and pears. They are mostly carbohydrates and water, and digest quickly.
- Limit the amount of food you eat. Being nervous, anxious, or overheated slows digestion. The more you eat, the longer it takes to digest.

*2 or 3 hours between strenuous activity:*

- Drink fluids (water, sports drinks, fruit juices) for rehydration.
- If you eat energy bars, drink plenty of fluids. Energy bars are dense and fluids speed digestion.
- Wait until after competition to eat whole grains and other high fiber foods. Fiber adds bulk and may slow the exit of food from the stomach.

*4 hours or more before strenuous activity:*

- Drink fluids (water, sports drinks, fruit juices) for rehydration.
- Have a meal containing mostly carbohydrates and some lean or low-fat protein. Examples are:
- Bagel with low-fat yogurt and fruit
- Cereal with low-fat milk and fruit
- Lean beef, chicken, or turkey sandwich and low-fat milk
- Pancakes with fruit and low-fat milk
- Pasta with veggies, lean meat, or fish
- Rice with beans and steamed vegetables
- Spaghetti with tomato sauce or meat sauce
- Take care with high fat and fried foods. They may take several hours to digest.

## ***DPHHS Earns Safety Award***

DPHHS was recently honored as one of four recipients of the Governor's Safety and Health Awards, which go to two public and two private sector employers who demonstrate outstanding commitment to employee safety.

Kathy Battrick and Rob Virts, DPHHS safety staff members, accepted the award at the Governor's Conference on Workers' Compensation and Occupational Safety.

Battrick said credit for the award goes to all employees who have actively participated in safety programs and activities. "We have always said that safety is everyone's responsibility and feel that everyone should be very proud that we have been recognized for our efforts," Battrick said. "Everyone plays a part, from employees to supervisors and managers. We also thank Director Laurie Ekanger for making employee safety an agency priority."

Since the creation of DPHHS in July 1995, the diversity of work performed by DPHHS employees has been a challenge in designing a comprehensive safety program. The program in place has paid off, however. Since July 1995, our safety efforts have resulted in a net

reduction in workers' compensation premiums from \$4,035,525 (FY96) to \$1,924,989 (FY97) to \$1,414,071 (FY99).

In 1999, DPHHS received the largest dividend awarded by the Montana State Fund, \$817,439. Most importantly, though, employees are more aware of their safety at work.

"This award reminds us that we need to work diligently to prevent accidents and injuries to our employees," Battrick said. "The safety of our employees and the people they serve should be – and is – of paramount importance."

The safety program consists of several different elements, including: training, violence in the workplace prevention programs, ergonomics, bloodborne pathogens, repetitive motion injuries, early return to work programs, patient assault prevention programs, hazardous communications, injury tracking and analysis, and several policies regarding safety.

Virts and Battrick offer a huge "thank you" to all department employees who have contributed to the safety program.

## **Montanans with Disabilities Given Increased Services Flexibility**

The Montana Developmental Disabilities Program (DDP) on Oct. 1 began a new, innovative program that gave 281 clients the flexibility to select and pay for essential, limited services of their choice.

Initiated with authority from the 1999 Legislature, the "Community Supports" program provides individuals with a capped spending amount and enables them to select from various types of services, such as adaptive equipment, environmental modifications, transportation assistance or daily living training. Before any services are provided, DDP staff will review all requests to see if they are reasonable and appropriate.

Previously, such services were only offered as a "package" — an array of services were offered and paid for. Because of the high cost of this method, service access was very limited. In fact, as of April 1999 the state had 417 people waiting for DDP services.

If people so choose, they can receive Community Supports while waiting for other adult services, such as a group home or day program, DDP Director Maggie Bullock explained.

"This new approach to services is an attempt to 'get something for everyone' who is on the waiting list and is receiving minimal or no services," she said. Community Supports is designed to assist people with disabilities to live more independently in the community of their choice.

"Community supports is not designed to be a total care program, however," Bullock added. "Services available through Community Supports will augment those services already available for individuals who either can live independently with limited supports or who, if they need extensive support, are already receiving it through existing resources, such as their family."

For more information about the program, contact Bullock or Sue Jackson at 444-2995.

# State Kicks-off Sexual Abstinence Campaign

*"Sex Lasts a Moment, Being a Parent Lasts a Lifetime"*

Lt. Gov. Judy Martz and DPHHS on Sept. 28 outlined details of a sexual abstinence project aimed at encouraging teen-agers to think carefully about the implications of premarital sex and parenthood.

During a press conference, Martz and other speakers discussed the financial and emotional aspects of unplanned pregnancies, focusing on the project theme "Sex Lasts a Moment, Being a Parent Lasts a Lifetime."

Staff members from the DPHHS Abstinence Partnership, members of the Governor's Abstinence Advisory Board and members of the general public involved in community abstinence efforts also discussed their work and introduced a month-long advertising campaign that began Oct. 1. The campaign features billboards, posters, and television, radio and newspaper advertisements that discourage pre-marital sex.

"The purpose of this campaign is to decrease sexual activity among Montana youth and encourage young people not to have sex until they're married," Martz told the audience. Funding for the campaign comes from a combination of federal and state funds as well as donations and contributed services. Federal funding provides \$186,439 a year through 2002 and the state is contributing direct

funding or in-kind support on a 3-to-4 matching basis.

Thus far, five community organizations have received \$60,000 in grant funding to develop abstinence mentoring programs, parent workshops and other educational activities. The communities are Missoula, Butte, Helena, Sidney and Wolf Point.

Community programs already in operation include the 1st Way Pregnancy Support Center, Missoula; New Hope Pregnancy Support Center, Butte; Roman Catholic Diocese of Helena; Immaculate Conception Church Religious Education Program, Wolf Point; Richland County Health Department, Sidney.

In addition, requests for proposals recently were distributed in an effort to establish local programs in six more communities. Applications are due Nov. 5.

Overall, the Abstinence Partnership hopes to:

- Reduce the number of teens who have engaged in sexual intercourse before marriage.
- Reduce the rate of out-of-wedlock pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases.
- Show teen-agers the social and psychological health gains made by abstaining from sex until married.

For more information about the Abstinence Partnership, contact Jon Berg at 444-3008.

## About this newsletter . . .

News and information about the programs and people in DPHHS are presented in this monthly newsletter. We welcome your suggestions and comments: e-mail to [kpekoc@state.mt.us](mailto:kpekoc@state.mt.us) or telephone (406) 444-2596.

This newsletter is also available on line (<http://www.dphhs.state.mt.us/res/news99.htm>) and we are hoping to soon develop an e-mail version for direct distribution.

Those contributing to this newsletter are:

Ken Pekoc, editor  
Susan Ramsey, Child Support Enforcement  
Patty Smith, Human Resources  
John Zeeck, Disability Services  
Distribution coordinator, Vacant  
Designer, Peggy Bronson, Publications & Graphics

## Montana's Promise



Chemical Dependency Bureau Chief Roland Mena discusses a \$27,500 grant contribution his office made to help mentor, protect and nurture Montana children. Mena, Lt. Gov. Judy Martz and children from the Centerville School spoke as part of a Montana's Promise press conference on Sept. 13. Montana's Promise also received \$27,500 from the Montana Coin Operators Association; the money will be used to fund various community projects throughout the state.

## Montana Association of the Deaf Thanks Peggy Williams

When the new Montana Deaf and Hard of Hearing (MDHHS) Center announced its opening in the Spring, the Montana Association of the Deaf (MAD) singled out Peggy Williams, Vocational Rehabilitation, for special thanks by giving her a "MAD Award" for her "excellent support, guidance and help." Williams is the Program Support Bureau Chief for the Vocational Rehabilitation Program of the Disability Services Division of DPHHS.

Williams is responsible for developing the contract that provides start-up funding for the Center. According to Williams, the contract between MAD and Vocational Rehabilitation will run for four and one-half years. After that time the Center is projected to be self-sufficient.

Williams says she's happy to see the Center off to a successful start because of the important services it provides in Montana. Center objectives are to develop a comprehensive list of interpreters available statewide, develop and prepare an interpreter referral system, and finally to develop and distribute materials and begin a public awareness and education campaign.

As a result of these activities, Williams says, any person or group that needs a sign language interpreter can contact the Center to obtain a list of interpreters in their area. The Center can also make contacts on behalf of groups to obtain interpreter services. This may be especially helpful if there are no interpreters in the immediate area and an interpreter is needed to travel to the site.

In addition, the public education and awareness programs will offer counseling, support and advocacy to people or employers who might be concerned about hiring someone who is deaf or has hearing problems, she said. MDHHS may be contacted by calling: 406-771-9053 phone, 406-771-9194 TTY, or 406-771-8056 FAX. The Center address is: P.O. Box 6433, Great Falls, 59406-6433.

## Children's Services Provider, Miles City Win Community Awards

Citing the ability to "foster collaboration and cooperation among the many public and private programs that serve and support young children and families," Miles City agencies, including the Developmental Education Assistance Program (DEAP), have received Communities of Excellence awards from the office of U.S. Rep. Rick Hill.

Miles City is one of only five communities in the nation recognized as a community committed to identifying the needs of, and providing services to, young children and their families.

In a letter to Miles City Mayor George Kurkowski, Gov. Marc Racicot wrote that Miles City was chosen from among 48 nominees nationwide. The Communities Can! Team from Georgetown University made the nominations, along with members of the Federal Interagency Coordinating Council. Nominations originated from members of the Montana Family Support Services Advisory Council (Jan Spiegle Stinger, Child and Family Specialist from the Developmental Disabilities Program, and Sharon Wagner, Special Health Services Supervisor from the Health Policy and Services Division).

"Communities chosen for these awards have demonstrated an ability to foster collaboration and cooperation among the many public and private

programs that serve and support young children and families, involvement of families in designing and implementing programs, an inclusive approach to serving children with special needs and an innovative spirit in utilizing complex programs to meet the specific needs of their families," Racicot wrote.

DEAP contracts with the Developmental Disabilities Program (DDP) to provide services to children and their families in the Miles City area. DEAP services include early intervention, evaluation and diagnosis, family education and support, and children's community homes.

### Pediatricians Honor Ellery, Rep. Soft and OPI's Keenan

The American Academy of Pediatrics Montana Chapter last month recognized three Montanans for their efforts helping children maintain access to sound medical care.

"Child Advocate Awards" went to Nancy Ellery, DPHHS Health Policy and Services Division Administrator, Rep. Loren Soft from Billings and Nancy Keenan, Superintendent of the Office of Public Instruction.

# Improving Public Health is a Statewide Team Effort

By Melanie Reynolds, Statewide Turning Point Coordinator

The concept of "public health" sounds simple, but have you ever stopped to think about all that public health entails? Things like flu shots, restaurant inspections and water quality are part of public health. So are prenatal care, children's vaccines, septic system reviews and much, much more.

No one is immune to public health threats. Ongoing and emergency needs from E. Coli outbreaks, bioterrorism threats, uninsured children, and other issues routinely present new challenges to local officials and public health workers.

Fortunately for Montana, we are one of 14 states participating in the National Turning Point Initiative. This project, jointly funded through the Robert Wood Johnson and W.K. Kellogg Foundations, allows state and local partnerships to work together to strengthen public health. We have four local partnerships that represent Montana's broadly dispersed, diverse communities. The partnerships are Sheridan County Turning Point, Gallatin County Public Health Alliance, Fort Peck Health Coalition (Roosevelt, Daniels and Valley counties and the Fort Peck Reservation) and the Cornerstone Project (Flathead, Lake and Sanders counties.)

Each partnership is developing its own public health improvement activities using local ideas and solutions. Statewide efforts are coordinated through DPHHS and the Montana Public Health Improvement Task Force.

The Task Force, with input from a variety of stakeholders over the past six months, has developed a strategic plan for a strong public health system. The plan includes detailed strategies, time frames and these six core strategies:

- Developing a blueprint of a public health system.
- Facilitating a coordinated public health system.
- Enhancing workforce education and training.
- Improving public health comprehension and awareness.
- Developing and maintaining accepted standards to enable improved quality of services and accountability.
- Maximizing resources to support public health.

Public input is encouraged as we develop this plan for improving Montana's public health system. The next Task Force Meeting is Nov. 3 at the Billings Holiday Inn Grand.

The Task Force proposes to complete the plan once public input is considered by March 2000. To receive a copy of the draft plan or information about the November meeting, contact Melanie Reynolds, (406) 444-4474, or write: DPHHS, Cogswell Building, P.O. Box 20291, Helena, 59620-2951.

3300 copies of this document were published at an estimated cost of \$ 38 per copy. The total cost of \$1,254 includes \$912 for printing & \$342 for distribution. Publication & mailing assistance was provided by the employees of Helena Industries, Inc.



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